

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

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JAN 22 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger (med) NK

SUBJECT: Reactions to Your Trip

Welcome home.

You may be interested in some of the intelligence and political reporting we have received as to reactions to your trip, and of some of my own personal thoughts arising from the reporting we have received.

Our friends abroad hear a great deal of diplomatic language from our representatives, while at the same time they have been hearing a great deal of undiplomatic language and speculation as to our future intentions from the U.S. press. You performed a real service in cutting through the resulting confusion, and in providing a forthright and candid picture of what we will and will not do for our friends in unequivocal terms. You showed that you and the Administration are still their friends and still very much involved in their future. I think that this provided them with far greater reassurance than any number of generalities about U.S. friendship through normal diplomatic channels would have done.

I think that Asians have a much clearer picture of the Nixon Doctrine as a result of your trip. The Doctrine needed to be explained in a positive framework, to correct the press speculation and to recover the ground lost in the Philippines and Thailand because of the Symington Subcommittee hearings and the unfortunate incident about Thai rice.

Particularly in the smaller countries, it was flattering to be visited by the American Vice President, and we had favorable reports of your willingness to listen and learn. The visit to the Singapore housing development was a good example.

DOS, NSS, review completed

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The press treatment was almost uniformly favorable, except in Australia before your visit when they thought you were being "isolated." More important, the treatment got warmer and better during and after each stop. Even in Australia, the impromptu press conference at the Embassy seems to have turned press treatment almost completely around, to the point where there was wide approbation upon your departure.

Manila

The salient feature perhaps was that the Manila press, which in recent years has managed to put a bad interpretation on almost everything which the U.S. says or does, gave you good coverage and refrained from the usual attacks.

I thought your conversation with Marcos a model exposition of what we are trying to do, particularly in suggesting a desire to get on with base negotiations while accommodating his wish for a deferral, and in explaining why we may move toward a reduced base structure in the Philippines.

The conversation with Korean Prime Minister Chung was useful in showing him that we plan to continue to help the ROK but will not be pressured into commitments on specific MAP levels.

Vietnam

Your stop in Saigon was a useful reaffirmation of the Administration's sincere concern for bringing the war to an end in a way which will preserve the best interests of the South Vietnamese people. While the Vietnamization policy is accepted by most Vietnamese, there are some fears remaining that we might eventually "cut and run." Your presence helped to dispel such fears, and added to a popular sense of confidence about the future. I believe that this sense of confidence was passed on by you to the Asian leaders whom you met on the rest of your trip, and helped in their understanding of the President's Vietnam policy.

Taipei

Your unscheduled foray into the middle of the welcoming crowd during the motorcade apparently made quite an impression, as did the fact

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that President Chiang (who makes his appearances imperially) decided to accompany you on your departure drive to the airport.

Your suggestion to Chiang Ching-kuo that the donor country must make the decision on MAP was well taken and may have put greater realism into the GRC campaign for F-4s. Similarly, I think that the Chinese leaders will be reassured as to our commitment but less inclined to wishful thinking after your exposition on our view of the off-shore islands and our policy toward Communist China.

Bangkok

As you know better than I, Thanom and Thanat feel that they have been wronged by us in several ways lately, and they were not easily mollified. They are, of course, particularly concerned that we do not understand the importance of Laos to Thai security. You volunteered your awareness of that relationship, and I think that that reassured them, as did the fact that we showed that we are not totally impervious to their feelings by cooperating in the reinstitution of part of the Thai-GVN rice deal.

Following the visit, Thanom and Thanat both privately expressed pleasure at your visit. I think they believe in our continued friendship, even while they recognize that the changed world may require a new and more assertive Thai policy to deal with their problems.

Kathmandu and Kabul

Our Embassies in both Kathmandu and Kabul report that the visit was highly successful. Both governments seemed to have deeply appreciated being given the special attention of a Vice Presidential visit and welcomed the opportunity to hear first hand what the Nixon Doctrine means and how it applies to them. They also appreciated your willingness to listen sympathetically to their problems, even though you made no new commitments.

Kuala Lumpur

The papers particularly praised your "modest approach."

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The Tunku and Razak both apparently knew what to expect and were happy with the visit. We have reports that the Home and Foreign Ministries were disappointed to learn that the Nixon Doctrine did not mean more money for them. They had apparently looked upon it as a general charter of economic and material support to Asian countries.

Singapore

Your stop in Singapore and conversations with Lee Kuan Yew, who among non-allied Southeast Asian leaders has been the most forthright in supporting the U.S. presence in Vietnam, was very valuable in demonstrating our interest in this area. In the face of the British withdrawal, the Singaporeans want to be reassured of this interest, and were. The fact that Lee Kuan Yew went beyond the scheduled time in his conversations with you indicated the value which he attached to the meeting. Press coverage of your own and Mrs. Agnew's activities was uniformly favorable -- a remarkable event in Asia. Summing up the impression you made, a normally critical newspaper called your visit "an honor for a tiny tropical country like ours."

Indonesia

The informal and friendly atmosphere which characterized your visit to Bali permitted a very useful exchange. From the standpoint of the Indonesians, your taking the time during an unusually crowded schedule to visit their country showed that the interest in their security and progress which the President expressed last July continues in effect. This is important to them, since they look to us as being "first among equals" in assuring Indonesian development. From our standpoint, we gained through your conversation with Foreign Minister Malik a better feeling about Asian views on regional economic cooperation as well as cooperation in the security field than we have yet received from any other source.

Australia

As I noted, there was a carping note in the Australian press before your arrival over the security precautions and your alleged isolation from the people. Your press conference in the Embassy rectified this, and gained the support of the press. Australians appreciate candor, and took your remarks about the purposes of your visit extremely well. As to the official gains, immediately after your departure Prime

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Minister Gorton sent a personal message to the President to express his appreciation for your visit and to say what an excellent impression you and Mrs. Agnew had made. He added that he and his senior colleagues on the Cabinet were very pleased with the frank discussions which you had with them on Vietnamization and the Nixon Doctrine. In addition, both official and private sources in Australia were gratified by your assurances that Australia can rely on the Anzus Treaty, and that the US remains a Pacific power. Gorton's foreign policy of course takes cooperation with us as one of its most important principles.

New Zealand

As in Australia, your remarks about the continuing US role in the Pacific and our reliability as an ally were very well received. Newspaper commentary appeared to focus on these elements. Your dignity and forbearance in the face of demonstrations put the demonstrators on the defensive, and in any event were inconsequential in terms of majority opinion and US-New Zealand relations. Prime Minister Holyoake felt that your visit had strengthened these relations, and had given New Zealand officials much better insight into US policies and intentions.

Incidentally, the Chinese Communists followed your progress and remarked acidly on your travels, without getting into much substance. They accused you of fearmongering Taiwan, and of timidly requiring heavy security escorts; this is their normal pattern.

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ACTION

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January 20, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John Holdridge *116 for*

SUBJECT: Memorandum to the Vice President on His Asian  
Trip

I attach a suggested memorandum to the Vice President, summarizing key aspects of the reaction to his trip, as we gathered it from intelligence and Embassy reporting.

We had asked State for a general wrap-up, but have been informed that Secretary Rogers plans to hand that summary personally to the Vice President. Consequently, we have confined your memorandum to the key issues and impressions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum to the Vice President at Tab A.

Enclosure

Tab A - Memo to Vice President

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